

**FITCHBURG PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2016**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Paula Caron, Chair  
John DiPasquale (7:15 p.m.)  
Mike DiPietro  
Mike Hurley  
Kristin Sweeney  
Andrew Van Hazinga  
Laura O'Kane, (assoc. member)

**PLANNING OFFICE:** Mike O'Hara

**Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 6:15 p.m. in the Conference Room, Community Room, Fitchburg Fire Headquarters, 33 North St. Only four members present initially, but the Board went ahead with items that didn't require more than four members.

**Meeting Minutes**

Minutes of the January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved with minor corrections.

**ANR plans**

None.

**MINOR SITE PLAN REVIEW**

Dufour, 688 John Fitch Hwy., "Auto Shower" - two additional bays (rev. plan)

Atty. George Watts present on behalf of Dufour's.

In August 2015, Planning Board had voted to approve the Site Plan, subject to several conditions, including providing a privacy fence to screen abutter on left at 147 Townsend St. Revised plan showed a chain link fence w/ slats, instead of a white vinyl fence. Atty. Watts stated Dufour is concerned about tagging & vandalism to white vinyl fence. He presented a letter signed by the abutter at 147 Townsend stating that he is OK with the chain link fence.

Motion made & seconded to approve Minor Site Plan Modification, provided landscaping and fence as shown in plan is installed by May 31<sup>st</sup>. Vote 4-0 in favor.

Royal Fuel, 880 Water St. - conversion of garage bays to retail

Plan revised 12/17/2015 to reflect Planning Board conditions of approval on 12/15/15:

- Replacement of guardrail on left side of property
- Striping parking spaces
- Showing dumpster location and screening

Timeline: All exterior improvements are to be done prior to occupancy.

Motion made & seconded to approve Minor Site Plan Modification. Vote 4-0 in favor.

Superior Car Rental, 265 Summer St. (rear)

Rob Oliva, Ross Assocs. presented plan. Applicant estimates he will have 10-20 spaces on site for employees and rental vehicles. 31 spaces at left rear corner were shown on plan, business will be located at rear of site, behind the Dollar General and Midas Muffler. Existing fenced-in area w/ damaged vehicles is from the former tenant - a limousine service. There are approx. 75 additional spaces on site, it was formerly a car dealership.

Ms. Caron suggested cleaning up the landscaping out front and adding a sign for the business to the marquee sign out front. Rob will suggest that to the applicant.

Motion made & seconded to approve Minor Site Plan. Vote 4-0 in favor.

Garden Remedies, 307 Airport Rd. - minor HVAC additions

Minor additions in front of building - plan revised 1-5-16 shows addition of building pad for HVAC equipment. Also, accessible entrance ramp added.

Motion made & seconded to approve Minor Modification of Site Plan. Vote 4-0 in favor.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

City Council petitions

- Special Permit - 12 Park St. - reuse non-conforming dwelling vacant for >2 years as a 2-family  
Board recommended in favor of the application, subject to providing four parking spaces on site, submitting a plan to City Council showing these parking spaces, and rehabilitation of the parking surface prior to occupancy.

Planning Board CDBG recommendations

Larry Casassa, Community Development Dept. reviewed staff recommendations with Board.  
The latest Year 42 Entitlement amount will be \$898,104, which is \$6,579 more than what was estimated.  
Board agreed to put those additional funds into demolition, and to recommend in favor of the rest of the Staff's recommendations.

South St. & Electric Ave. - "Safe Routes to School" improvements

Board reviewed plan of proposed improvements to the intersection. Board and public informed that informational meeting on the project will be held Weds. Feb 24<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 p.m. @ South Street School cafeteria.

River St. / Main St. improvements - MassWorks project

Board reviewed plan of reconstruction of entire width of Main/River from Chestnut St. to 245 River St. – new pavement, bike lanes, sidewalks, plantings, putting some utilities underground. Board and public informed that informational meeting on the project will be held Thursday, Feb 25<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 p.m.  
@ Center Pizza, 245 River St.

West Fitchburg Overlay District - Dimensional requirements & waivers

Discussion deferred to a later meeting.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Special Permit - Mixed Use Development, 579 South St. - Mark Gionet

7:18 p.m. Hearing opened. 6 members present (*Caron, DiPasquale, DiPietro, Hurley, Sweeney, Van Hazinga*), plus Ms. O'Kane who had been confirmed by City Council as an Associate Member earlier in the evening.

Mark Gionet, applicant, Larry Sabeau & Chris Anderson of Hannigan Engineering present.

Larry presented site plan. Proposed is a one-story 4,500 sq. ft. commercial building in front and two 17-unit multifamily buildings deeper into the parcel. Parking: 2 spaces per unit, plus 1 space per 100 sq. ft. office space. Parking req'd: 87 spaces, provided: 101 spaces.

Small play area proposed. There's not much room for a landscaped buffer, installing fence instead.

Sight distance at proposed site driveway: approx. 300 feet to the north, 325 feet to the south.

Stormwater: Site will be graded to allow runoff to drain to water quality swale for detention. Will handle the 2-, 10-, 50- & 100-year storm events.

Wastewater: Office building will have gravity sewer; apartments will have E-1 pump systems to a 2-inch force main.

Water: 2-inch domestic service and 6-inch fire service to each apt. building. No separate fire line to office building since < 7,500 sq. ft. reqm't for sprinklers.

There is gas in Norval Ave. & it will be connected to site. Site lighting is in the design phase.

Architectural elevations shown to Board and abutters. Mark G wants different façade treatment on different floors. Looking to build something a bit different. Entrance to office building will be in the rear. He has been contacted by an M.D. who is interested in locating their office there.

Trash: Will have trash room on each floor, private trash collection.  
Rear of the second residential building will be located at about the current limit of clearing on the site.

The multifamily bldgs. will be rentals, not condos. Both buildings will have 5 units on 1<sup>st</sup> floor, 6 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6 on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Mix of unit types - 1<sup>st</sup> floor: 1 1-BR, 4 2-BR. 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> floors: 2 1-BR & 4 2-BRs.

A Traffic Impact Study is being done & will be submitted.

On north side – no landscaping planned but they'll keep the 8-9 foot high stockade fence. From the edge of parking area to the property line is approximately 10 feet.

Public Comment:

Bev Hiller, 21 Norval Ave. - Not in favor, it's a residential area. There is a need for rental housing, but not there. Wonders how many accidents there have been in the area. Lots of traffic. No sidewalks.

M. Gionet - there is mixed use already in the area

Paul Fontaine, Sr. - has been at abutting office location since 1980, but also representing Ashley Ridge Condo association - Questioned how many gaps there are in the traffic. Concerned w/ left turns going out of site, Board should require a 3<sup>rd</sup> party review of traffic. With traffic issues and density, is this a better thing for Fitchburg?

Ashley Ridge abutters are concerned w/ privacy.

Mark G. – Privacy could be addressed by fencing and/or landscaping.

Kim Irwin: Her unit looks out onto barn & a view of the city, which she would lose with the development.

Richard Blaquere, 593 South St. abutter - closest point of development is 18 feet to his property line.

When Quatralle was owner of this property the issue was sight distance.

David French, 562 South St. (cor. Norval): there's 2 accidents/month. Suggested see accident reports.

Once vehicle went into yard at 579 South.

Tim Corbett, 21 Norval Ave. - concerned w/ traffic.

Timeline? Mark G: Build office bldg. first, then the two residential bldgs. later.

Jason Valera, Norval Ave. - concerned that it will be Section 8 housing.

Ms. Caron: Market Rate? Yes, he wants good quality units that professionals can afford.

Size of units & rent? Mark: 900 - 1,100 sq. ft. Rents: \$900 -1,300.

Abutter at Ashley Ridge: Will there be blasting? Concerned w/ effect on water & sewer lines, & if will affect his property like when St. Anthony St. was built.

Mark G: the units will be on slabs, no basements.

Wayne Gendron, 576 South – Traffic has increased in past 10-15 years

Jon Riciutti, Parks Board - Concerned if any effect on abutting Coggshall Park.

Bill Cauley, 649 South St. - Wants info on drainage.

Larry Sabean, Hannigan Eng: The grading will be pitched toward the north side of property to a drainage swale. Chris, Hannigan Eng: Majority of site is A & B soils. He explained the drainage system. It will handle the 100-year storm (6.5 inches in 24-hr. period).

Paul Fontaine, Sr. suggested fly test balloons at four corner of the proposed buildings so neighbors can see how high they would be.

Motion made & seconded to continue hearing to March 15<sup>th</sup>. Vote in favor.

Meeting adjourned: 9:20 p.m.

Next meeting: 3/15/16

Minutes approved 4/19/16